

Thick As Thieves by Hemlock_Dumpling

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Summary:

After another long day at Scoops Ahoy, Robin and Steve sneak into the secret part of the freezer where the best ice cream stash hides.

In the Upside Down.

Written for the Osmosis Exchange.

Thick As Thieves

Author's Note:

- For [WildCherryPie](#).

As this story was written for the Osmosis Exchange, where one creates for a fandom they're familiar with through "Osmosis," there will likely be things about Stranger Things I've not been known or took liberal creativity with to keep with the spirit of the Exchange.

Nevertheless, I hope you enjoy this fun little story, and my first Stranger Things attempt.

(See more in my Author Notes and the Osmosis Exchange page.)

"Another day, another dollar."

The last customer left the ice cream parlour known as *Scoops Ahoy*, and Robin sighed with relief. Deciding to wrap things up a little early to guarantee a prompt finish, she began to slide out the ice cream containers from the display case.

Meanwhile, her co-worker and best friend, Steve Harrington, mopped the floor, restoring the blue and white tiles to a surprisingly pristine shine.

Admiring his sparkling handiwork, he flicked his feathery brown hair from his face, then steered the wheeled bucket of water towards Robin and the front counter.

"And Hawkins says?" Steve asked, propping the back door to the forbidden staff area open.

Sealing up the last tub, Robin shrugged. "Here's a hint. *Grateful Dead*."

“Naturally.” Steve shouldn’t have been surprised that a flavour named after Jerry Garcia would be so popular. Cherry Garcia had beaten out the sweet syrup of Raspberry Ripple, the soft melting sensation of classic Vanilla, and the old faithful flavour, Strawberry. “Well, a one hit wonder it’s not, that’s for sure.”

Once they had cleared away stock and cleaning supplies in the back, Robin finally popped the question. “Wanna get the good stuff?”

Steve couldn’t hold back his excited grin. This had been their routine since becoming co-workers (in crime.) After a long, arduous shift, they cleaned up, cashed in, then confiscated the goods.

The best ice cream that put Scoops Ahoy on the map back in the 70s.

With conspiratory grins, they sneaked into the staff area, rubbing their hands as they entered the freezer area. Puffs of breath ghosted into the air, goosebumps tingling across their bare arms.

Shelves of all flavours surrounded them... but not the one they were looking for.

Tucked in the furthest corner where two wooden bats, and a strangely bleached section of the wall. Even against almost bleached walls, it stood out like a persistent mould.

Taking a bat each, they approached the stain streaking down the wall... and entered.

Another world existed behind the wall, a place that might have passed for a darker version of their own if not for how oppressive and nightmarish it was.

In a mirrored version of their quaint little freezer, Robin and Steve stepped into a chilling space, watching as spores drifted helplessly around them.

The entire world felt submerged in a thick grey stillness that infected

everything. Metal shelving twisted into monstrous forms, and the once simple freezer stretched out into an endless landscape with barely a spec of light.

And they weren't alone...

Crawling into view were four legged creatures, no bigger than dogs. Their heads split, like a blooming petal, exposing way too many rows of teeth to the intruding humans.

Tightening his grip of the bat, Steve observed their surroundings, thankful they weren't surrounded... yet. "You know, maybe we need to rethink where this stuff gets stored? Health and safety, and all that noise?"

Shifting to her friend's side, ready to back him up, Robin smirked. "Huh. Where's your sense of adventure? Just think of it like D&D."

When one of the alert creatures charged, so did the duo, swinging hard.

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Many high fives and congratulatory cheers later, Robin and Steve sat at a table, tucking into their hard earned prize. Cool green mint with chocolate chip ice cream slowly disappeared, as they engaged in small talk.

"Think you'll tell her one day?" Steve asked, trying to ignore the stinging and aches behind his newly applied finger plasters, but grateful he didn't actually lose fingers to those creatures.

Playing with her spoon, Robin thought pensively, then offered a tight smile. "I will if you do."

Steve snorted, a bashful blush creeping upon his face. He stabbed the

melted mind boop left inside his tub, sometimes wishing he didn't wear his heart on his sleeve so easily. "Deal. But only if we get matching tattoos of heartbreak if they say no."

"Agreed." Robin's smile softened. "Honestly though? Facing those... things in the Backspace, or whatever it is... feels easier than telling a girl I like how I feel."

"You and me both," Steve admitted, trying not to think of an extra score on his Board of Failed Woos. "I mean, he..."

Sudden movement by the front door drew their attention. For a terrible moment, the possibility of the dreaded *after hour customers not understanding the concept of time* entertained them.

The very last thing they needed after a literal fight to the death over ice cream.

"Think if we ignore them, they'll go away?" Robin suggested under the breath, keeping her head bowed.

Steve dared to peek first, then smiled. He nudged Robin, who tried to look anywhere other than the doorway. When she finally did, she wasn't disappointed.

Requesting entrance aboard the Scoops Ahoy, with smiles and a few waves, were Mike, Will, Lucas, Dustin, Max, and Eleven.

"They're out late," Steve stated, waving back at the Party, and gesturing for them to enter. "Makes you wonder, right?"

Robin gave the curious teenager one of her classic looks. "We can't talk. There's only one thing I know for sure..."

"Yeah?" Steve raised his eyebrows curiously.

Robin tapped her spoon against one of the still full tubs of mint chocolate chip ice cream, then nodded towards the younger kids, her

feathery hair dancing in the light. “We’re gonna need a little help.”

Author's Note:

Written for Celedonia as part of the Osmosis Exchange. As the spirit of the Exchange is writing fandoms you only know through ‘Osmosis,’ I went with Stranger Things where the little I know is through the Twitter feed.

My breakdown know how of Stranger Things solely through Osmosis can only be described as the 80s, Kids playing D&D, a mysterious other world with monsters that have plant heads, and the two teens working in the ice cream shop that are LGBT+ best friends forever? They are loved by my feed, they are very close and look out for the younger characters, so I wanted to capture that in the story.

So fun fact. I did a little research on ice cream trends around the 80s, and Cherry Garcia was indeed meant to be a popular flavour, named after the Grateful Dead’s Jerry Garcia. Mint chocolate chip had its moment in the 70s, and as someone who loves that flavour, I wanted to give a little nod to it. Thus, the great Otherworld Heist to get all the Mint happened, even fighting off dangerous monsters to get it.

Very limited knowledge of this series, but thank you very much for reading, and I hope you enjoyed it. (I will check it out soon.) 💖